

In Opposition to HB 1141

Chairman and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose HB 1141. I do understand the desire to keep public funds from being used for partisan political purposes, but as written, this bill will cause serious damage to the professional and academic communities of North Dakota.

Professional organizations would be considered “political” under HB 1141, due to their prerogative to support or oppose legislation that may affect their members. These organizations are vital to professional development for the fields they cover.

Attending conferences allows educators, librarians, and other professionals to keep up with the latest innovations, network, and participate in continuing education. For university employees, sometimes conference attendance is required for promotion and tenure. Teachers and school librarians are required to do continuing education programs, many of which are offered by professional organizations. To ban the use of state funds for these services will seriously limit the ability of our North Dakota educators and librarians to fulfill these responsibilities.

Attracting and retaining professionals in North Dakota is already a challenge, I was questioned by friends and family when I decided to move here. If we do not allow our professionals and academics professional development opportunities funded by their employers, we risk these groups choosing to work outside of our state. North Dakota may also lose the benefits received from professional organizations, from grant money to revenue from hosted events.

For the reasons stated above, I ask that the committee does not pass HB 1141.

Regards,

Hannah Beebe
Valley City, ND